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Navy Seeks Blood Donors To Beef Up Summer Supply
By Brian Badura, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
WASHINGTON, DC - Summer is here and chances are your calendar is filling with vacation and warm weather plans. But the Navy Blood Program hopes you'll find time to help members of the military community by giving blood.

"The demand for blood is the same year round, but the donations tend to fall off during the summer months," said LCDR Michael Libby, MSC, deputy director of the Navy Blood Program at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

How important is your donation? Consider that each year, military blood donor centers need to collect 110,000 units of whole blood to meet the needs of the military community.

"The donations we receive help support Department of Defense (DoD) beneficiaries, as well as overseas commitments like Operation Enduring Freedom," said Libby.

Giving blood is simple and takes about an hour. Donors should be in good health, weigh at least 110 pounds and not have made a donation in the past 56 days. There is no maximum age limit for giving blood, but donors should be at least 17 years of age. There are some additional restrictions for prospective donors who lived in Europe since 1980 as a precautionary measure against the spread of mad cow disease.

Servicemembers, spouses, retirees, and DoD civilian employees are all encouraged to give through the Navy

Blood Program.

Donation centers are located at the following naval facilities:

- Armed Services Blood Donor Center, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md.
- Navy Blood Donor Center, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va.
- Navy Blood Donor Center, Naval Medical Center San Diego
- Navy Blood Donor Center, Naval Hospital Great Lakes, Ill.
- Navy Blood Donor Center, Naval Hospital Charleston, S.C.
- Armed Service Blood Bank Center, U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan; and
- U.S. Navy Blood Donor Center, U.S. Naval Hospital Guam.

The centers also sponsor blood drives, visiting military and federal installations throughout the U.S. and overseas to make it convenient for donors to give. Watch for drive notices where you work.

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Bethesda Home To DoD's First PET Scanner

By J03 Rebecca Horton, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md.

Bethesda, Md. - National Naval Medical Center Bethesda now possesses the military's first Positron Emission Tomography, or PET, scanner, which will help some seriously ill patients get more accurate diagnoses and better care.

The PET scanner is effective in diagnosing and evaluating such illnesses as lung and colon cancer, some brain tumors and some neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.

The \$1.7 million PET scanner, which looks similar to Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or Computed Tomography (CT) scanners many people are familiar with, but not only does the new scanner provide structural details of organs, it is able to provide pictures of organs at work.

"This is exciting, not only for NNMCMC, but also for the Navy Medicine community," said CAPT Frank Schraml, staff psychiatrist and nuclear medicine service chief at Bethesda.

In addition to detecting malignancies early, it is also useful in detecting and diagnosing neurological, pulmonary and orthopedic problems and other diseases.

"We will eventually be saving the hospital money because we will be able to avoid many invasive and non-invasive diagnostic procedures," said Schraml. "Also, we won't have to send patients to another medical facility, where (a single) PET scan can cost between \$2,000 and \$4,000."

Schraml learned to interpret PET images at Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in Baltimore. He and other specialists are getting additional PET training at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

He estimates that seven to eight patients a day will be scanned.

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Navy Research Finds Way to Stop Bleeding When Every Second Counts

By Gail Cleer, Office of Naval Research

ARLINGTON, Va. - A razor nick during a too-close shave 10 years ago may lead to saving lives on the battlefield.

Scientist Frank Hursey was working with absorptive materials back in the late 80s when he cut himself shaving. He picked up a volcanic mineral he'd been studying and decided to try it on the nick. The product worked so well to stop the bleeding that Hursey set to work doing further testing.

Three patents and 10 years of testing and development later, the product, QuikClot, is trademarked and now ready for the field.

The granulated product is packaged for individual use that can be poured directly into a profusely bleeding wound to coagulate blood within seconds. Tests conducted for the Office of Naval Research by Dr. Hasan B. Alam at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences were so impressive that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared the product earlier this month. The product is already on the ground with U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

While the commercial makers of QuikClot aren't specific about what's in it, they do say the basic ingredient is found in cosmetics and non-dairy creamers, and it's chemically and biologically inert, so it offers no inherent risk of disease transmission and is non-allergenic.

The product costs roughly \$20 per unit, has an extended shelf life, and remains viable in extreme temperatures. It can stay in the body until the injured person is removed to medical care, and, since it is mineral in nature, it changes neither in size nor consistency when wound fluids are fully absorbed. That makes it easy to remove.

"This is a major advance in casualty care," said LCDR Dave Street of the Office of Naval Research. "Battlefield deaths due to massive blood loss remain at around 50 percent - a statistic that has not changed since the Civil War. Anything that changes this will represent a greatly increased chance of survival for the wounded."

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Research Winners' Work May Aid SEALs, Hearing Loss
By JO3 Theresa Raymond, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth,
Va.

Portsmouth, Va. - The 2002 Navy-Wide Clinical Investigation Program's annual research competition, sponsored by the Naval School of Health Sciences (NSHS), was held at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth recently.

The competition stimulates interest in research that supports the Navy Graduate Medical Education (GME) Program and promotes Clinical Investigation Program (CIP) research to military and civilian communities.

Winners in this year's competition were ENS W. Chris Fox, MC, from Naval Special Warfare Command San Diego, and Army Col. Richard Kopke, MC, from Naval Medical Center San Diego.

Fox's research, "Cardiovascular Baroreceptors Mediate Susceptibility To Hypothermia In Man," won at the resident level. Kopke's research, the "Pharmacological Prevention And Reversal Of Noise-Induced Hearing Loss," won at the staff level.

Fox studied the causes of hypothermia by testing individuals in a Navy SEAL detachment.

CAPT Joe Kernan, commanding officer of Nautical Special Warfare Development Group, said he is eager to take this new information back to the field. "Most of the research has an applicability, particularly the one on hypothermia. Because of the fact that we (SEALs) operate in such cold environments, we have to determine through the research studies what factors can cause hypothermia."

Kopke's research was on prevention and reversal of noise-induced hearing loss. He was able to prove the drug he developed helps prevent hearing loss, and at times, reverses hearing loss.

The Army Colonel is stationed at NMC San Diego to allow him to work with Navy researchers on hearing loss prevention, which has important implications for DoD and the civilian community.

"The two winning scientists and their work represent the best of nearly 125 research abstracts submitted this year," said CAPT Harry Tillman, NC, director for the clinical investigation program, Naval School of Health Sciences, which sponsors the annual competition. "It's clear Navy's quality biomedical researchers contribute greatly to cutting edge health care and operational readiness through research."

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Navy Medicine Team Wins Adventure Race
By JOC Bill Austin, Naval Hospital Support Office
Jacksonville, Fla.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Four Navy Medicine athletes stationed at Jacksonville recently answered their personal call to adventure and entered a two-day action

packed race filled with both physical and mental challenges. Their efforts during the arduous event paid off with a first place win.

LCDR James Warmowski, MSC, and LTJG Angela Webster, MSC, of the Naval Hospital Support Office, and LTJG Christopher Cooper, MSC, and LT James "Russ" Linderman, MSC, of the Aviation Survival Training Center, competed in the Southeast Outdoors Intercoastal Outdoor Adventure Challenge hosted by Naval Station Mayport earlier this month.

The race tests the strength of participating teams in several areas such as running, swimming, kayaking, and mountain biking. Seven teams from around the region entered the competition.

The new phenomenon of adventure racing challenges the abilities of athletes from beginners to elite and professional level multi-sport athletes. There are usually three or more types of sports within one race and other challenges sometimes presented as "special tests" or "mystery events" are peppered within the race. All team members must start and finish together.

"I've never done anything like this before but always wanted to," said Webster. The mother of three said that prior to entering the race, she had never been in a kayak or ridden a mountain bike before.

Warmowski has entered numerous running events. He said that the key to placing in an adventure type race is team training.

"The unique thing about the adventure challenge is the necessity to work as a team and to always think about the other people when not only racing, but preparing for events. Our success came from all of us training as a team."

As the winners of this challenge, the team receives an all-expense paid trip to compete in West Virginia's "Wilderness Challenge Adventure Race" on Oct. 3.

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Camp Lejeune Celebrates Once-In-Its-History Event

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. - Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune has something to cheer about - three times over.

Last week, for the first time in the hospital's 15-year history, the staff delivered triplets.

A team of about 25 medical personnel helped work the three birthing stations for the special delivery. The three tiny girls were born prematurely at 29 weeks.

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Online Gulf War-Related Medical Library Introduced From DoD Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, DC - The Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, announced the

launch of an Internet site called Medsearch, a central repository of Gulf War-related medical research. Medsearch is at www.gulflink.osd.mil/medsearch.

"This Website, a cooperative effort in support of Gulf War veterans and their families, reflects the commitment of all three agencies to learning more about deployment related illnesses, and sharing what we learn," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

In July 2001, DoD, VA and CDC agreed to combine their resources to create this one-stop source of research information. The development team worked with veterans and researchers to ensure that Medsearch was user-friendly. Developers designed the Website to serve the needs of both the layperson and the researcher.

The site is indexed with plain language topic headings so that anyone can readily locate information. Those headings include topics of particular interest to Gulf War veterans that may not be featured in other sources, such as pesticides and depleted uranium. Scientists, who want more specific data, will find it on Medsearch as well.

The goal of Medsearch's creators is to include all the federally funded research into the illnesses of Gulf War veterans in one centralized place. The site will be updated frequently to ensure that it contains the most recent and complete information available.

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Bush Signs Health Security, Bioterrorism Act

By Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, DC - President Bush signed The Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Act of 2002 recently to enhance the nation's ability to prevent, identify and respond to bioterrorism.

As the world learned last Sept. 11, terrorists' weapons of choice are unconventional, Bush said. On that day, U.S. airplanes became "weapons of terror." In the days following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S. mail carried deadly microscopic spores.

"Bioterrorism is a real threat to our country," the president said. Terrorist groups seek biological weapons and some rogue states already have them, he said. Such weapons are potentially the most dangerous in the world.

"Last fall's anthrax attacks were an incredible tragedy to a lot of people in America," Bush said. The attacks sent "a warning we needed and have heeded."

"It's important that we confront these real threats to our country and prepare for future emergencies," Bush said. "This bill I sign today is a part of the process of doing our duty to protect innocent Americans from an enemy that hates America."

The act will enhance America's ability to prevent and detect bioterrorist acts. Under the law, U.S. authorities will be required to improve inspections of food entering U.S. ports. Officials will have better tools to contain attacks on food supplies.

"We'll have the authority to track biological materials anywhere in the United States," Bush noted.

The act will strengthen communications networks linking health care providers with public health authorities. Since health care professionals are likely to be the first to recognize a biological attack, Bush said, "the speed with which they detect and respond ... could be the difference between containment and catastrophe."

The act will also strengthen the health care system's ability to speed treatment. It will provide local health authorities with tools and resources and further develop the nation's stockpiles of smallpox vaccines. It will help U.S. officials develop better medicines and make new lifesaving drugs and therapies available more quickly.

"Protecting our citizens against bioterrorism is an urgent duty of American governments," the president concluded. "We must develop the learning, the technology and the health care delivery systems that will allow us to respond to attacks with state of the art medical care throughout our entire country."

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HealthWatch: Tick Season A Reason To Brush Up On Protection
By HMCS William Dwyer, Naval Hospital Cherry Point, N.C.

CHERRY POINT, N.C. - The advent of summer means the beginning of another season - tick season. For many outdoor enthusiasts, this is a good opportunity to brush up on tick awareness.

Ticks come in many varieties and are often found in wooded and grassy areas. They can transmit a number of diseases including tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, and tick encephalitis.

The most common tick-transmitted disease in the U.S. is Lyme disease. While many species can transmit the disease, the most common carrier is the blacklegged, or deer, tick. More than 13,000 cases of Lyme disease were reported in 2001.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include a circular expanding red rash - a "bull's eye" - at the bite site, fatigue, headaches, and flu-like symptoms. More serious cases attack joint and neurological sites, and can mean a slow and difficult recovery for the patient.

If you notice a tick on your body, you should act quickly to remove it. If the tick is attached, use care so that the mouth and head don't break off and remain in the skin.

The Lyme Disease Foundation recommends grasping the

tick as close to the head as possible with blunt tweezers, then pulling straight back with gentle steady pressure. Clean the bite area with soap and water and apply antiseptic.

According to LT Carlos Villavicencio, MC, pediatrician at Naval Hospital Cherry Point, NC, a visit to a health care provider is recommended if you notice any signs of infection. If the tick is engorged, you should save it for future identification purposes. "We need to identify the tick to provide proper treatment," said Villavicencio.

Place it in a glass bottle or sealed plastic bag and write the date of removal on the container.

Two commonly recommended home remedy tick removal methods shouldn't be used.

Don't light a match and press it against the tick. This method can cause the mouthparts of the tick to break off in the skin or cause the tick to empty part of its blood meal back into the host, creating a greater risk for infection and disease transmission.

Also, don't smothering the tick with oil, petroleum jelly or butter, or by applying chemicals. Once again, these methods usually cause more harm than good.

Tick control is best handled by close observation and by being aware of your surroundings. It is important to mow and trim the grass and bushes immediately adjacent to your home. Keep debris, woodpiles and other similar habitats away from your home.

Dress properly when in tick habitats by tucking pants into socks, shirts into pants, and by wearing light colored clothing. Light colors allows you to spot the ticks better. Using tick and insect repellent can also help. When returning from the outdoors, it's smart to do a "tick check" even on unexposed skin since ticks will often crawl many inches undetected before biting.

For more information on ticks and Lyme disease, contact your local preventive medicine department or visit www.lyme.org.

- Dwyer is the assistant department head in the preventive medicine department at Naval Hospital Cherry Point.

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